

## Moving Day

'That's the removal van gone,' she said to herself. 'Now I can have a cuppa and a bath and pop my on my pyjamas.'

It had been an exhausting day for Ivy, the long drive down and dealing with the removal men wasn't what she was used to. When Frank had left her on New Year's Day after thirty-eight years of what she thought of as a marriage. He had gone off with Ivy's best friend, so all in all she had lost two people from her life. That was why she decided to move away and start afresh. She chose this house as it backed onto a lovely park and she would always be able to have a morning walk there.

She walked into the kitchen to find the box the kettle was in, she went through six boxes till she found it and another two before she found the lead. Then the doorbell rang.

Wearily negotiating the array of boxes she found herself answering the door to another woman about the same age as herself. "Hello, I'm Aggie from next door. Thought I'd come and be the first to welcome you to Dovetail Avenue."

"Thank you, that's very kind," replied Ivy, "would you like a cuppa, I was just putting the kettle on?"

"That would be lovely, I'm bone-dry after the day I've had. It'll be nice to have a chat and get to know you."

'GREAT, that's all I need', thought Ivy. 'Still I'll be honest with her when we have finished drinking our tea, I'll just tell her how tired I am.'

Aggie saw their meeting differently and Ivy heard all of her life story. Told her all about her day! Ivy never got a word in.

Then Aggie started on about the neighbours, all of them!

"Next door to me, he has a motor-bike, roars up and down the street at weekends. Makes a frightful noise when all his mates come round on theirs. But they are lovely boys, do anything for you."

"A vicar lives across the road, I have to curb my language when I walk passed him."

"Market day is Wednesday, go early or all the best is gone. Watch your change at the greengrocer, I've been short-changed more times than I can remember. Also he'll give you the bruised fruit if you're not keeping an eye on him."

“The one in the big corner house, she's always having different men in. I'm not passing judgement; it's up to people to do what they want to do. But if she was one of my daughters, I'd have a few things to say to her.”

“Between her and the drycleaner, there's Nina, from Slovenia.”

“Bin day's Thursday. Put it out by six as they come early.”

“Her at number 23, you'll know her, she's always wearing sunglasses. Lives in a fantasy world does she. Thinks she's French. D'you know what she named her children? Chardonnay and Champagne. So ooh-la-la.”

“Oh yeah, them at 29, they're always having loud music on at the weekend, so you'll need to keep your windows shut. Talking of windows, I'll make sure the window cleaner knows about you when he comes next time.”

“The parents of the school down the road often park outside, sometimes across our drives. Blooming cheek! So you might want to put something on the road to keep them away. I use a couple of buckets and a plank of wood.”

After that Ivy heard all the gossip about all the other residents in the Avenue. Not much of the information would be retained she thought. Aggie went through the busses, the clubs, churches and even the fitness classes. Then all the best takeaways, mini-cabs, hairdressers, doctors, dentists and chiropodists. Detail for the PC repair man were given, opening times of the library, not forgetting the aerial erector, as it looked like she needed one.

Ivy's was convinced she had nodded off once or twice, but she seemed to get away with it. Then at two-thirty in the morning Aggie decided it was time for her to leave, at three-fifteen she finally went.

Ivy never did get her bath, in fact she fell asleep resting against the front door.